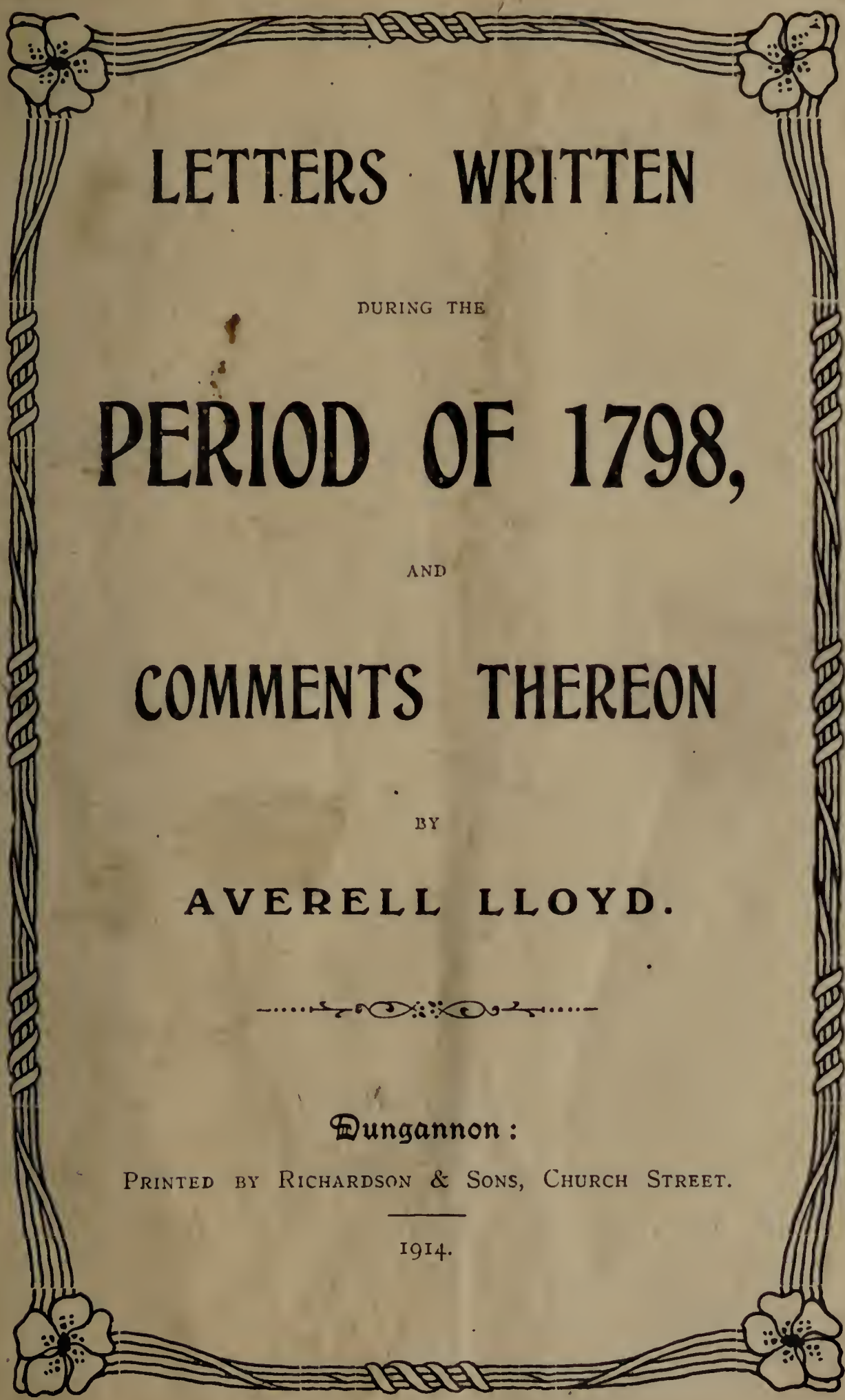


IRISH 1798 COLLECTION

v. George

145



LETTERS WRITTEN

DURING THE

PERIOD OF 1798,

AND

COMMENTS THEREON

BY

AVERELL LLOYD.



Dungannon :

PRINTED BY RICHARDSON & SONS, CHURCH STREET.

1914.

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Letters read and Comments

THEREON, ON THE

PERIOD OF 1798.



At a Lecture given by the Rev. R. J. Porter, on "1798" (" who fears to speak of '98 !") in the Presbyterian Church, Benburb, on Friday Evening, the 16th December, 1898. Mr. Averell Lloyd, who presided, read the following letters referring to that period, and briefly commented on them.

He said

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

After the very eloquent and instructive Lecture we have just heard from the Rev. R. J. Porter, of Keady, on " who fears to speak of '98 !" in which he has graphically described the dreadful massacres and diabolical cruelties inflicted on the unoffending Protestants at Enniscorthy, Wexford, Scullabogue Barn, and Vinegar Hill, I will not enter further into the details of such scenes, but should any of you wish to study more closely the History of those times, I refer you to the Memoir of the life of the Rev. Adam Averell, a kinsman of my own, who was a Church of England Clergyman ; and, because he was asked by a little boy one day if he preached for money, resigned his living, and being of independent means, joined the Primitive Wesleyan Methodists, and preached at that time in nearly all the towns in Ireland, and I will read you a few letters written by my Great Grand-uncle to my Great Grandfather before and after that eventful time, which, I am sure, will interest you, and which will enable us to narrow the origin of the

Rebellion into a very small compass. We will then see which side has real cause for rejoicing, and we can draw therefrom a lesson which it would be well if the enemies of this country under the name of Home Rulers would follow, and perhaps we might take a few hints which would be useful to ourselves.

The first letter which I will read, was written by my Great Grand-uncle, from Limerick, and dated 8th January, 1797. He was the next year made Prisoner by the French, and lost his Carriage and Horses. You will see he was always found where duty called him, and he did not allow the grass to grow under his feet. He was therefore in a position to give an accurate account of what occurred.

To Richard Lloyd, Esq., Tamnamore.

“ My Dear Dick,

As our Invading Enemy have taken their departure, I with pleasure take up my pen to tell you so. I am sure we may say with grateful hearts that the Lord fought our battle. Never to be sure did the English Fleet lose such an opportunity of lately destroying the French Main as now, for I verily believe 5 or 6 of the line would have destroyed the whole, they were so dispersed and disabled; as it was they have lost several. *Two* of them that were in this River were in the greatest distress, almost starving, at the allowance of a Biscuit a day, and wished to be landed in order to be taken Prisoners and get something to eat, and if even our Fleet, which is now out do not intercept them, I hope more of them will not reach Brest. How fortunate for the kingdom that they came to us, instead of going to the North. *There*, I fear they would be joined by many, whereas here there never was seen such a general glow of Loyal Spirit as shown in everyone of every description. Even the poor Cottagers moving to the roadsides with their pots of potatoes, boiled for their own dinners, and driving their cows and milking them for the Soldiers as they marched past. The men going as Pioneers for miles and shovelling the deep snow that impeded the march of the Cannon and Cars, and as for the Yeomanry they beggared description. We fixed Posts every six or seven miles where we could for the purpose of forwarding expresses, with which one

by day and two by night carried it at the rate of 8 or 9 miles an hour, and were ready at any call to mount instantly and this taken in rotation by those many of whom are worth £1,000 a year. This is truly pleasing, but still more so in seeing those who had no property to loose taking the warm part they did.

Ever yours, &c., &c.,
LANCELOT HILL."

In this letter, the allusion to the Lord having fought the Battle, refers to the great storm which destroyed several of the Enemy's Ships, and dispersed their Fleet.

The reference to the French not going to the North requires some explanation. The Rebellion was started under the name of United Irishmen ; this was for the purpose of embracing all Religious Denominations, just as in our day the Land Leaguers, and Home Rulers, include some who are not Roman Catholics, and it at first took some hold in Ulster, but as soon as it was known that in the South and West it was a war of Protestant extermination, they withdrew from it. I may here mention a coincident, that it was at this time the Killyman Yeomanry got the name of Wreckers. My Grandfather, who commanded them, was ordered to march with his men to Gargagh, where a Scotch Colonel commanded the Royal Troops, but the Shopkeepers being disaffected, would not sell them food. When this was reported to the commanding officer, he told them since they could not get food for love or money let them just go and take it, which they did.

*I here give you another letter dated 4th March, 1797.
To Richard Lloyd, Tamnamore.*

Limerick, 4th March, 1797.

" My Dear Dick,

We are very ill off here now, as no gold is to be seen, and paper is of no use. God grant the French may not pay us another visit.

Yours, &c., &c.,

LANCELOT HILL."

I ask you to note the Spirit of Loyalty and Devotion, which everywhere prevailed, and that the first War Note had the effect of reducing the country to beggary ; but the next letters will show you what a change came over the people in the next 16 months, by the teaching and preaching of a few Rebel Agitators. The actual Rebellion broke out on the 23rd May, 1798 (by the destruction of all the Mail Coaches leaving Dublin, a prearranged signal) three months after that 1100 French landed at Killala, in Mayo, under General Humbert. He marched south, took Ballina and Castlebar, and from that he went to Foxford, on the Road to Sligo. He then made for Granard, almost in the centre of Ireland, where at least he hoped to gain adherents. He was however beaten and all his Army captured at the Battle of Ballynamuck. Here the Armagh Militia greatly distinguished themselves, as is told in another letter, which says they deserve well of their country. They only fired one volley, when they charged bayonets and their Grenadiers attacked the picked Grenadiers of Italy and broke their ranks with great slaughter.

The next Letter is dated from Elphin, 31st August, 1798, to Richard Lloyd, of Tamnamore.

“ My Dear Dick,

I was a Prisoner at large with the French for 4 days, and when they marched I got leave to proceed for Limerick, but not by the direct road, and here I am most hospitably detained by the Bishop for want of a conveyance. When the story of this Invasion is told 50 years hence it will not be believed, that about 400 French with two pieces of Cannon, and joined, by say 1,000 of the lowest dregs of the people have been let march 30 miles into the country, surprise and beat 2,000 troops with a large train of Artillery, some of which and all the stores and ammunition in the town of Castlebar were taken, and that within the hearing of a General with 2,000 more, who instead of advancing or even remaining where he was *very safe*, retreated 20 miles. I saw him yesterday and he expected orders, he said, to move forward again. There are not less than 12,000 men in red coats within 20 miles of these few desperadoes, and as the Lord Lieutenant is now in this country, doubt not but I shall be able to give you a good

account of them before the post goes out to-morrow. They borrowed my 3 horses and valued them at 150 Guineas, and gave a receipt, which says it is good for the 3 horses ; but I think the horses would be better. Hearing that the Lord Lieutenant was within 25 miles of this, and that he wanted some information about the strength of the enemy, I set off at 2 o'clock, stayed an hour-and-a-half with him, and returned here in 13 hours, and thank God not a bit fatigued. His Excellency expressed himself much obliged by my visit, put me in mind of a good dinner I gave him in Limerick, 25 years ago, and said he hoped to get my horses for me next Monday.

Ever yours, &c.,

LANCELOT HILL."

The last Letter is a most remarkable one, it is dated from Limerick, 24th Sept., 1798, to Richard Lloyd, Tamnamore.

" My Dear Dick,

I congratulate you on the good disposition of the Country, and of Mr. Tandy's speedy exit. I really think when they, and those in Connaught made their report, the Directory will give up all idea of Invading us again. Indeed, it now appears that I was remarkably lucky in getting away, as the poor Bishop and all his family and inhabitants are in the Rebel hands, who have taken and kept possession when the French left it, and threaten to put them all to death, if they should be attacked by the army. The way I was mistaken in the numbers landed, was by their keeping me down where they landed with their stores, and marched off to Castlebar, without coming to Killala at all, and they kept one piece of cannon there also. Indeed they, and the Connaught Irish are fairly committed, for, besides, treating them worse than dogs while with them, the day they laid down their arms many of the Irish got into the French Ranks, and being clothed like them they hoped to escape instant death, but they were turned out by the French, saying "go out you Rebels, go and be Shot," which being immediately done, and on their falling cried out "Ha! that be good for you Rebels," and General Humbert told Lord Cornwallis, the Lord Lieutenant, that the

Directory told him he would meet the whole mass of the people up ready to receive him, and that he would have all the gentlemen with boats, and money in their pockets. Instead of which, he met with none but a hoard of the vilest bloody assassins, and plundering cowards that ever disgraced the human shape; one only excepted, who, he was sorry to hear was killed in the action (his name was M'Donnell) who was the only person that was against a general Massacre.

Yours affectionately,

LANCELOT HILL."

Now, I ask you why was it that the French turned the Irish out to be shot? It was because they had been deceived by them, having been told they would meet the mass of the Irish People, and instead of this, they found themselves associated with the vilest assassins that ever disgraced the human form. It seems to me almost outside the bounds of belief to think that our fellow-countrymen, now at the dawn of the 20th century, with all its education and enlightenment, are commemorating the centenary of such deeds, even in Belfast, with the sanction of our Unionist Government, notwithstanding the remonstrances of the loyalists, and which was attended with such riots and bloodshed. It there was one spark of humanity about them, they should hide their shamed faces, and thank God that their forefathers fell into the hands of a merciful general, who did not deal them the same fate, which they would have dealt ours had they been victors and not vanquished.

But, Ladies and Gentlemen, It is we who should celebrate this year, in joyful thanks to God for the great victories, both on land and sea, the one at Ballynamuck, on the 8th September, and the other on the 12th October, 1798, off the coast of Donegal. For had the French and Rebels been victorious the Rebellion would have become general, and as there were at that time 12 more French Ships, with 6,000 more troops, off our shores, it might have resulted in the undoing of the Glorious Deliverance effected by King William just 110 years before, at Derry, Aughrim, and the Boyne; which, to use the words of a Roman Catholic Judge, "saved us from Popery, and him from Slavery."

The Rebellion did not end here, but in December of that year the head of the Roman Catholic Church had to issue the following mandate :—

Copy—Exhortation by JAMES DILLON.

The following exhortation was read on Sunday last, the 21st inst., by the Roman Catholic Clergy of the County of Armagh, at their respective chapels :—

“ To the Roman Catholic Inhabitants of the Parish of———

DEAR CHRISTIANS,

You are hereby required and exhorted in the name of God not to bring an odium on the Roman Catholic Body of this country, by the misguided conduct of some of you, who in violation of every law, dare appear in numbers for no other purpose than to insult the principles of the holy religion you profess, and in the end bring on the inoffensive Catholics impending destruction.

Your good neighbours and Protestant fellow-subjects, I trust, will meet you, on every occasion, with all the sentiments of cordiality and benevolence.

For these and many other considerations, you are exhorted again and again, to desist appearing in numbers, and to return immediately to your duty towards God, and to your lawful industry, otherwise the severest censures of the Church shall be denounced against the refractory.

Dated at Armagh, this 18th December, 1798, by
JAMES DILLON.”

And the following letter shows the state the country was in in 1803 :—

Copy of Letter from Limerick, to Richard Lloyd, Tamnamore.

“ MY DEAR RICHARD,

We have a most bloody assize. 10 of those tried are to suffer, and there are about 50 still to try, and yet Government would fain persuade the public that we are in perfect tranquillity, indeed we were not so disturbed during

the rebellion, as at present, and if there should be a war and any landing of the enemy the loyalists will have a troublesome time of it, but I hope the spirited preparations that are making for war, will be the means of preventing it.

A remarkable circumstance, which serves to show the truth of the old proverb, "Murder will not lie." A man who was this day taken to be hanged, was, 3 years ago, a party who murdered the most of a whole family, in a most barbarous manner, and several suffered for it then. This man fled and went to America, where he stayed 2 years and returned lately, and about 2 months ago was driving a pig into the town of Bruff (for sale) where the widow and daughter of the murdered person had taken a house as a place of safety, and the pig forced into that very house, followed by its owner who was immediately recognized by the woman and secured.

Yours affectionately,

LANCELOT HILL.

19th March, 1803."

There are two lessons to be learned from this letter. First—Murder will not lie, and that even a pig in God's hands can be made the means of detecting the guilty. The second—That the way to avert war is to be ready for it, as our Government is now doing.

From these days to now, the Rebel has been at work under *one* name or *another*. Now in 1898, it is *Ireland* for the *Irish*, or *Home Rule*. Now supposing that England said to-morrow, "We will give Ireland to the Irish," how would they go about finding them? It would be like the Picture of Diogenes in search of a wise man. The task would be hopeless. For you must remember that from the earliest date we can find, at least 10 different Nations conquered, or settled, in this country: the Partholonians, Nemedians, Formorians, Belgians, Milisians, Danes, Norwegians, Spaniards, and English, and Scotch under Cromwell, and the Ulster Plantations. Doubtless some of you have seen a quantity of herrings, or Lough Neagh Pollen together, and you would rightly conclude they belong to the same family from their striking resemblance, or the Pigmies, who are a race of dwarfs, who inhabit the woods in Africa, but to discover a True-Born Irishman from

the colour of his skin, eyes, or hair, or his height, it would be impossible. You might get over the height by the reason a Nationalist, who (was considerably over the average size and height), gave, who was trying to make out an Irish grievance by saying, "that his countrymen would all have been his height if it had not been for the Famine year."

Now, we all know that what is true as to a family, is true as to a country. If all the members of a family work harmoniously under one head, there is sure to be peace and plenty, but if they do not pull together, it is sure soon to come to ruin. This is the case with Ireland. We are told we are poor and we know it, *but who is to blame?* *It is the rebel and the agitator*; altho' they know they will never gain their object. France got enough of them in 1798. America which was at one time their happy hunting ground, has found them out, and if they ask America to-day, she will tell them that they make good soles, but very bad uppers, and would advise them to be quiet, peaceful, and loyal subjects under a Queen, whose motto is Civil and Religious Liberty, and Liberty of Conscience for all, and under whose flag there is Free Trade and an open door for all nations. They know that as long as England has a ship on the sea, or a soldier on land, she will never give them Home Rule. What did the historian Froude tell them? "Ireland is geographically and politically attached to this country, and cannot be allowed to leave us, if she wished. In passing over the executive power to an Irish Parliament, we only increase the difficulty of retaining Ireland. We shall alienate the loyal part of the population, who will regard themselves as betrayed. The necessity of re-conquest will remain, but the evil of it and the bloodshed to be occasioned by it, will be infinitely enhanced."

Are they not, my friends, standing before an unclimbable barrier. And is it not time for them to turn to the rightabout, now on the dawn of a new century. For what did George IV. tell them when leaving Ireland in 1821? He said "he hoped that not only the spirit of loyal union which now so generally exists will remain unimpaired and unabated, but that every cause of irritation will be avoided and discouraged, and a security be thus afforded for the continuance of that

concord amongst themselves, which is not less essential to his happiness than to their own, and which has been his chief object to cherish and promote." I say from *this Platform to-night*, we will meet our fellow-countrymen with all the sentiments of cordiality and benevolence, as expressed by the Roman Catholic Primate in 1798, and in the words of George IV, encourage mutual forbearance and good will. Cannot they who now differ from us religiously and politically, do the same?

In conclusion, I will only say, *this* 1898 of ours, has been a most eventful one. It has seen a Reconquest of the Soudan, Gordon avenged—the triumph of civilization over Savage Barbarism. It has seen the Local Government Bill pass into law, which hands over enormous power into the hands of every voter, be they men or women, in the country; it is now in their hands to make it a failure or a success, a curse or a blessing. It has seen the great approachment between the Anglo-American races, too long separated by the remembrance of past feuds, which I look upon as the greatest achievement of all, as it gathers into one concrete mass (with England at its head) all the English speaking people of the world, who, if they prove themselves worthy of their high destiny, hold the fate of the world in their hands. They can make right triumph over might. They can render wars impossible without their permission. They can introduce an era of Peace such as has been unknown in history. May God grant that the dawning century may inaugurate such a happy state of things, and that when our children's children come to celebrate the centenary of this year, they may with pride, remember *these deeds* and that England stood first amongst the nations of the earth, and that there may not be a man then in this island, who may not with pride feel that he belongs to an Empire on whose dominions the sun never sets, and who can proudly say:—

"Breathes there a man with soul so dead,
Who never to himself has said,
This is my own my native land."

AVERELL LLOYD.

Tannamore,

16th December, 1898.



